

## BLIND FOREMAN LEADS SOCIETY'S INDUSTRIAL DIVISION

While the primary purpose of the Society's Industrial Department is to provide facilities for training the blind for placement in private industry, the Department also provides permanent employment for several exceptionally qualified persons. One of these people is Richard Henry, Industrial Foreman.

Mr. Henry was recently honored for outstanding adjustment in a job by a handicapped person, an honor considered by The Toledo Society of the Blind as justly deserved.

Blinded by scarlet fever at the age of 5, Mr. Henry's first employment contact came in 1947 when he was twenty years old. His job was with Airway Electric Company as an assembly worker. By 1953 he had been promoted to assistant foreman, a position he held until Airway closed in mid 1957.



*Dick Henry supervises the industrial assembly and packaging work at The Society.*



*Here, Mr. Henry is helping a worker learn the assembly procedure.*

During slack periods at Airway, Dick had often filled in at The Toledo Society for the Blind on the assembly line. When his Airway job was finally terminated, he took a six weeks course in shop management at the Industrial Home for the Blind in Brooklyn and returned to The Society as Industrial Supervisor. He has working under him, approximately fifty blind and sighted employees, some part time, and some full time. In April, 1960 Dick completed an eight weeks course for shop foremen at the University of Toledo.

Aside from the Society, Dick is married and has a daughter, Dawn, age 13. His wife Florence is also blind, and both are very active in the Society's activities.

Dick's ability to lead and teach fellow handicapped workers is a constant inspiration to the hundreds of people passing thru the Society's rehabilitation program. His own personal example has been, we are certain, responsible for many individual successful adjustments.

## NO GOAL IS TOO HIGH

Blade Photo

*Mrs. Margaret Langenderfer Wenzel.*

Even as a child, Mrs. Margaret Langenderfer Wenzel wanted to be a teacher. As she grew older and entered high school she became even more determined that teaching would be her life's work.

Her work won her honors as a student at Libbey High School and at the University of Toledo. She then went on to receive her Education Degree from Ohio State University and did post graduate study at the Columbus School for the Blind.

Mrs. Wenzel did reach her goal and is today, one of our most respected teachers.

Through her position as Home Teacher for the State of Ohio Division of Services for the Blind, Mrs. Wenzel is responsible for home teaching assignments in a twelve county area of N. W. Ohio.

Because of her fine training, and because she was blind herself since early childhood, Mrs. Wenzel's guidance has been extremely meaningful to the success of many programs now available for our blind citizens. For example, one of Mrs. Wenzel's main duties is home instructor for recipients of the Talking Book Program.

Working with the people in their own home, Mrs. Wenzel said, "It is easier to sense their real need. Often, a simple suggestion to the person that he or she might join one of The Toledo Society for the Blind's Clubs or recreational activities has meant a whole new life for an otherwise lonely individual."

Currently, Mrs. Wenzel is helping to organize a class for young blind girls at The Society to help them learn home-making. "The request for the class," she said, "came from a nine year old who asked if we could help her learn to iron." "There are many areas such as this that need our attention," Mrs. Wenzel commented, "but the most important thing every blind person must learn is self reliance."

## PEPSI CAPS FOR CAMP

The only regret we have for Eddie Larde is he could not see the proud expressions on everyone's face as he presented eight thousand bottle caps to The Society For The Blind. Eddie collected the caps which are redeemed by the Pepsi people, for 1/2c each, to help with the cost of The Society's Summer Camp for the Blind. Eddie's grandmother and a representative of the Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. watch as Eddie presents the caps to Mr. John Goerlich, Society President.



# The Toledo Society For The Blind NEWS

A NEWS LETTER TO HELP YOU BECOME BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THIS RED FEATHER AGENCY

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

In less than two decades our community has been able to destroy the "tin cup" image so often associated with our blind citizens. In Toledo today, blind begging is not only totally unnecessary, it is in violation of our city ordinance.

Toledo can well be proud of the accomplishment of The Toledo Society for the Blind as it continues "TO HELP BLIND PEOPLE MAKE CAREERS . . . RATHER THAN MAKING CAREERS OF BLINDNESS."



*Mayor John Potter*

## WOULD YOU SUCCEED IF YOU WERE BLIND?

What would happen if you or I went blind tomorrow? You say it couldn't happen. Of course it could!

It happens to thousands of unsuspecting individuals every year and, unfortunately, every year we grow older the chances of going blind increase. The largest percentage of blindness now comes in our later years.

Should this misfortune happen, what then? Ever think what you would do or how you would react? Probably not, at least not beyond a fleeting thought when the lights go out and you have had to grope for a new fuse or that frightening moment or two when an accident leaves us temporarily blind.

It is impossible to predict how anyone would react, particularly ourselves. Through our work at The Toledo Society for the Blind, however, we have been able to observe this one certain truth - Blindness alone is not an insurmountable obstacle in leading a happy and rewarding life.

There is no question that blindness is one of the most difficult hardships a person can face. It is a handicap that not only takes our most valuable sense from us, but, for at least a short time, leaves us completely dependent upon others for our very existence and most certainly for our adjustment back to earning a living and caring for our families.

Strangely, perhaps, the acceptance of this dependence is not the obstacle of blindness, but rather it is the rejection or refusal of help that so often prevents otherwise healthy, normal but blind people from returning to an active place in society.

To illustrate this point, we have taken a few of the case histories from our files of hundreds of people who did learn that help was to be accepted, not shunned -- people who, with the help of the Society's rehabilitation program, now live independent lives and have become active members of our community.

*John Goerlich,  
Society President*

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Time is near to start thinking about your 1965 Christmas cards. Enclosed are samples of the three cards we have this year. They are available immediately, with matching envelopes. You can order any number of cards you want, either without or with an imprint up to three lines. If you prefer, there is space for your signature and a personal message. We do not charge or invoice you for the cards. You make a contribution to The Society for whatever amount you see fit, and it is tax deductible. If you have a question as to what to send us, why not send us what you normally would pay for your cards.

The money received from the sale of the Christmas Cards is used by The Society to support many of the family activities that would not be possible with the support we receive from the United Appeal. These "extra" activities, which are such an important part of total rehabilitation, include the summer camp, family nights, help for the blind bowlers, and Santa Claus' annual visit to our blind children.

Will you help us this year? Our order blank is enclosed.





*William Lazenby at work in his upholstery shop.*

## BRIGHT YEARS AHEAD

Business is good for William Lazenby, 36. He is the owner of Bill's Upholstery Shop, 1553 W. Central. "In fact", said Bill, "right now I've got orders backed up until after the first of the year." The same was true when Bill stopped by the Society for the Blind last March to pick up two braille tape measurers. The reason he needed them, of course, was because he is blind.

Bill hasn't always been blind nor has he always known the upholstery business. In 1950, Bill was driving a truck in Southern Michigan and Northern Ohio. It was about that time his sight gradually began to fail. By January, 1957, his doctor ordered him to stop driving. His vision problem was traced to diabetes, which he had acquired as a young boy. A later examination revealed glaucoma.

This diagnosis has meant defeat for many, but not for Bill Lazenby. "After all," Bill explained, "I was married to a wonderful girl, and we had been blessed with a healthy son who was just nine months old at the time." Sensibly, Bill asked for and received help from many willing sources. In November of 1957, guided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Service for the Blind, Bill was sent to the Toledo Goodwill Industries for training in upholstery.

Bill's only experience in that field consisted of a summer job in an upholstery shop while he was in high school. He completed his course at Goodwill in nine months. He was trained to do everything except match material. His wife, Elizabeth took a shorter course with him so that she could help him.

Today, the Lazenbys are an active, interesting family experiencing the joys and problems of operating their own business and raising their young nine year old son Dennis.

Although living a life of physical darkness, Bill has many bright shiny years ahead of him.

## IRENE BREWER'S STORY

Personal success is measured in many ways. For Irene Brewer, success has been the development of one of the most pleasing and outgoing personalities we know.

When we first met Irene she was typical of many shut-ins; shy, frail in appearance, and hesitant about mixing with people. A case of measles had taken her eye sight at the age of ten and forced her to leave school in her Tennessee hometown. She had continued to live with her parents until their death. It was then she moved to Lucas County to live with her twin brother, Ira.

It was shortly after moving here when Irene was referred to The Society that one of the most remarkable changes in her life began to occur.

Still timid, inexperienced in social situations and employment, Irene did have the most important assets necessary to succeed. They were desire and willingness to try. She soon became a regular visitor to The Society and joined in many of the recreational activities. Dancing, sewing and swimming at the Blind's summer camp were new experiences to open the door for a full rewarding life.

As Irene's shyness subsided, confidence returned. She studied braille, and found mobility through her first Pilot dog. Equally important she received her first job working in The Society's industrial division.

Today, Irene Brewer and her dog, Clara, present "Pilot" demonstrations to school children; and her hand is continually extended to those who face the problems of blindness.

She has become a vivacious woman, giving her time and talents to helping others who have similar afflictions as hers.



*Irene Brewer with her pilot dog, Clara.*

## MEDICAL TYPIST

Transcribing surgical reports is the highly skilled and interesting profession of Donna Jean Robertson, dictaphone typist at Toledo Hospital.

Donna's sight began to seriously fail while attending DeVilbiss High School. Eye examinations revealed Optic Atrophy, which meant there was no chance her sight would improve.

Knowing she must prepare herself for any eventuality, Donna approached the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, State Services for the Blind for help. The rehabilitation service arranged for Donna to enroll for a year's training in a Toledo Secretarial School. After graduation, she more or less interned at St. Charles Hospital for three additional years.

Donna is now employed by Toledo Hospital. Despite her handicap, Donna is able to enjoy the responsibilities of a near normal life.

## FROM BLEAK DISCOURAGEMENT TO SUCCESSFUL ADJUSTMENT

This could well be the story of Floyd Mitchell of 578 Dearborn Street. Floyd was born in 1908 and lived the life of most carefree sighted people until 1943. While in the Army service, he gradually discovered he had a case of "Night Blindness." This was only a temporary thing he thought. At this time, Floyd was stationed with the Army Engineers at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, but the blindness did not go away; and so he was sent to Cleveland for further examination. After a period of time, he was returned to the service at Fort Leonard Wood. Here he found that, whenever he was sent to the rifle range, his eyes showed up excessively "red" -- so, Floyd was sent to the Cook and Bakery Department at Camp Crowder. But the blindness persisted -- so Floyd was sent to the Old Farm Rehabilitation Center in Connecticut. However, the sight did not return so Floyd was discharged from the Army and returned to Toledo and his old job as a car salesman for Ray Caldwell Motors.

Floyd had enough sight that he thought he was doing all right as a salesman, but he discovered that he was walking into his customers. This brought complaints. He soon gave up his job. The next two years were the "darkest and the blindest" of Floyd's life.

Floyd explained, "By getting drunk and bumping into people, they were more tolerant of me. Under the same circumstances, when I was not drunk, no one had a kind word for me!"

Floyd had been referred to the Veteran Rehabilitation Administration, but somehow or other they could not bring up any solution.

Then one day, someone referred him to us. Within six weeks Floyd was established in the Snack Bar Stand in the old Federal Building. The Federal Administration had suggested to Floyd that he take Blind Federal Pension, but Floyd was too bitter for that and felt that some place or another there ought to be a job--so he never accepted a Blind Veterans Pension, which he could have done.

Once he was established in the stand in the old Federal Building, life took on new meaning. With his wife, Lela,



*Federal Building employees find the service at Floyd Mitchell's snack bar is excellent.*

who has been a constant source of companionship and inspiration, Floyd set to work.

He was back with people, he was working. He gave up drinking.

When the vending was opened in the new Federal Building Post Office Building on N. Summit Street, Floyd was given the opportunity to operate it.

A year ago, Floyd was operated on at the Veteran Hospital and some of his sight has been restored but he is still -- blind.

We asked Floyd what he might say to a person going blind. He slowly replied, "The hardest thing I had to do was to accept the fact that I was going blind and would be blind." Until you recognize that you would be blind and that you had to live with it, life, as he told us, is one of dark despair.

Floyd likes to fish and is in the process of building a cabin in Northern Michigan where he can go to relax.

But once he had accepted his blindness -- then adjusted himself to it -- things became different. He feels "his experience would mean a lot to any person who has sight and then loses it."



*Mrs. Goldie Dancer reminiscing with Lloyd Holdridge and Jim Thompson at recent meeting of The Society's Progressive Club.*

## FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

"Could you help me learn to read braille", said the strange voice on the phone. The call was placed to The Toledo Society for the Blind almost thirty-five years ago. Today, that same voice is known and loved by everyone at The Society, and for good reason. It belongs to Mrs. Goldie Dancer.

Mrs. Dancer has never forgotten the kindness extended to her at The Society and has returned in kind by becoming teacher, friend, and companion to hundreds of other blind citizens seeking the same help she herself one time needed.

As Mrs. Dancer's warm laughter rose above the music at a recent Society dance, Jim Thompson and Lloyd Holdridge, couldn't help remembering when Mrs. Dancer gave them their first lessons in the use of the white cane. "She taught us that a blind person does not have to be a recluse unless they continue to let themselves be led around," they remarked.

Both blind men evidently took Mrs. Dancer's advice to heart, for today they are both raising fine families, and are employed in private industries.